

RESIST TEXTILE TECHNIQUES WITH NATURAL INDIGO DYEING

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Aranya Natural is a 100% sustainable unit, which practices natural dyeing for almost 23 years.

Indigo is by far the most commonly used blue vegetable dye and can be derived from plants found in temperate, tropical and sub-tropical climatic zones. We have been actively involved over the past 23 years to promote indigo dyed fabrics in terms of exhibitions, domestically and internationally.

Unlike most of the natural dyes, Indigo has an advantage that it does not require a mordant. The reversible reduction-Oxidation process of dyeing is known as 'Vatting' and therefore indigo is considered as a 'vat' dye. In short, dyeing can only take part in a vat or pot containing a soluble reduced form of the dye. Initially, Indigo vat was prepared with ingredients including casionthora seeds and wood ash water, but this didn't give us good results because of the climatic condition of Munnar. Later in 2008, Axcel Becker, an indigo dyeing artist from Norway came to Aranya Natural and taught us how to use natural indigo with Ferrous sulphate and Lime.

The most important factor of indigo dyeing is to maintain a pH value of 11 to 11.5 for cotton, linen and 10 to 11 for silk. Details of indigo dyeing process vary from place to place, depending on local traditions and ecology. Indigo is clearly more stable on animal fibers and even if it fades, there is only a moderate change in color.

Aranya Natural is mainly focused on the resist dyeing textile techniques like Shibori, Batik and Tie & dye.

Shibori is a Japanese manual resist dyeing technique, which produces patterns on fabric. There are an infinite number of ways one can bind, stitch, fold, twist, or compress cloth for shibori, and each way results in very different patterns.

At Aranya Natural, we make Batik fabric using wax resist dyeing process, by block printing the wax on to the fabric. There is a beauty in the individuality of each handmade piece. Batik has two aspects in real thing:-Technology and Art. Technology of Batik consists of the fabric, wax, dyes and auxiliaries whereas, the Art of it consists in patterns, ornamentation and composition.

Almost all the resist dyed fabrics are dyed in Indigo, and other natural dyes in lesser extent. Indigo has an advantage that it adheres well to natural fibers. In Aranya Natural, most of the resist dyeing techniques are done on cotton, silk and wool, hence it helps us to gain different shades of blue ranging from lighter to darker tones. Moreover, when dyed over other colors like Pomegranate yellow, Tea waste etc. it gives out rich shades of Blue and Green.

Today, textiles dyed with natural indigo are treasured and indigo dye is no longer symbolic of the common and ordinary.

The artists working with indigo has produced many excellent works of art using this dye. High product quality is maintained and natural indigo items are more popular and liked by everyone. Indigo dyes will continue to have a niche market, but we need to produce with good textile techniques and designs.